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ABSTRACT

The problem of the desegregation process in public schools, beginning with the Supreme Court decision Brown v the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, is that it is conceived of as an artificial climate imposed by ratios and busing rather than a learning situation wherein ethnocentricity is developed as a positive attribute. Integration, however, is an experience of heart and mind wherein different racial and ethnic groups exist in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. To achieve integration, educational systems have spent little time or resources in preparing staffs for teaching in an integrated climate. The results have often led to misunderstandings, fear, and hostility among both faculty and students. The first step in moving toward an integrated school climate would be to establish positive intergroup relations among professional educators. From there other problems and alternatives could be discussed. These include the need for the establishment of objectives and criteria for student evaluation based on diversified cultural backgrounds, the encouragement of rational inquiry into controversial issues in the classroom, and the stressing of diversified value systems to students. Other problems such as the need for new curriculum and methods of instruction could be openly discussed. The net result would be a new humanistic approach to education. A key ingredient to achieve this integrated classroom environment is the attitude of teachers. (Author/DE)

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# Integrating The Desegregated School: Some Observations And Suggestions

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## Introduction

Like it or not, we are confronted with the real problems associated with racial, cultural and ethnic pluralism, as individuals, as a nation, and especially as educators. Because of this social revolution, we have before us the dramatic occasion for renaissance of the educational process leading to a wholesome, truly integrated society for our youth.

Yet, in this crucial period of turmoil and tension, the educator is too often the follower, not the leader. Unless his voice is heard, he may lose the unique opportunity for general improvement or renaissance of our schools ironically presented by the civil rights movement of the 1960's. Unless he asserts himself, the phenomenon of resegregation may appear.

Educators in the future will need to come to grips with the problems impeding the efforts of the desegregation process to bring about an integrated environment. To do this educators will have to assess their own value reference system in terms of differing valuing complexus. This can only be accomplished when and if we as educators begin to internalize some of the cognitive information relative to the reasons for desegregation and seek to translate that cognitive data into affective classroom actions.

When it is stated that "desegregation will bring integration to our school", what does it mean? Frankly, it means very little. Desegregation is merely the physical mixing of different racial groups. It is aimed at achieving some sort of numerical balance among them. Integration, on the other hand, is an experience of heart and mind, rather than of bodily presence. It involves individual and group attitude changes (e.g., the removal of fears, hatreds, suspicions, and sterotyped) and is engendered by living with other racial and ethnic groups in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

With integration, every person receives a sincere invitation to swim in the main-stream of American life. This is the essence of democracy--and developing the democratic citizen is the main job of the school. We see, therefore, that desegregation is educationally valuable only as the first step toward integration. The logical corollary is: the educator must not be content with mere desegregation.[1]

## Moving From A Segregated To A Desegregated To An Integrated School Climate

Today many schools and school systems have moved from a segregated to a desegregated school climate but few have achieved an integrated school climate. Let's now take a look at what has existed as well as what needs to occur in order for an integrated school climate to become a way of life. (See Figure 1).

The school patterns which in the past established a duel system of learning for our youth as well as recent trends to reverse that practice are the result of political, social and economic forces interacting with the educational establishment. Moreover, changing educational philosophies and break-throughs in learning theory have added to the impetus of pluralistic education.

During the first half of the 20th Century the United States was characterized by a segregated school climate. (See Figure 1A). Under this pattern differences among students whether they be racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, social, economical, or political were treated as deterants to learning.

FIGURE NO. 1

The Changing Focus

of American Schools

Within Our Society

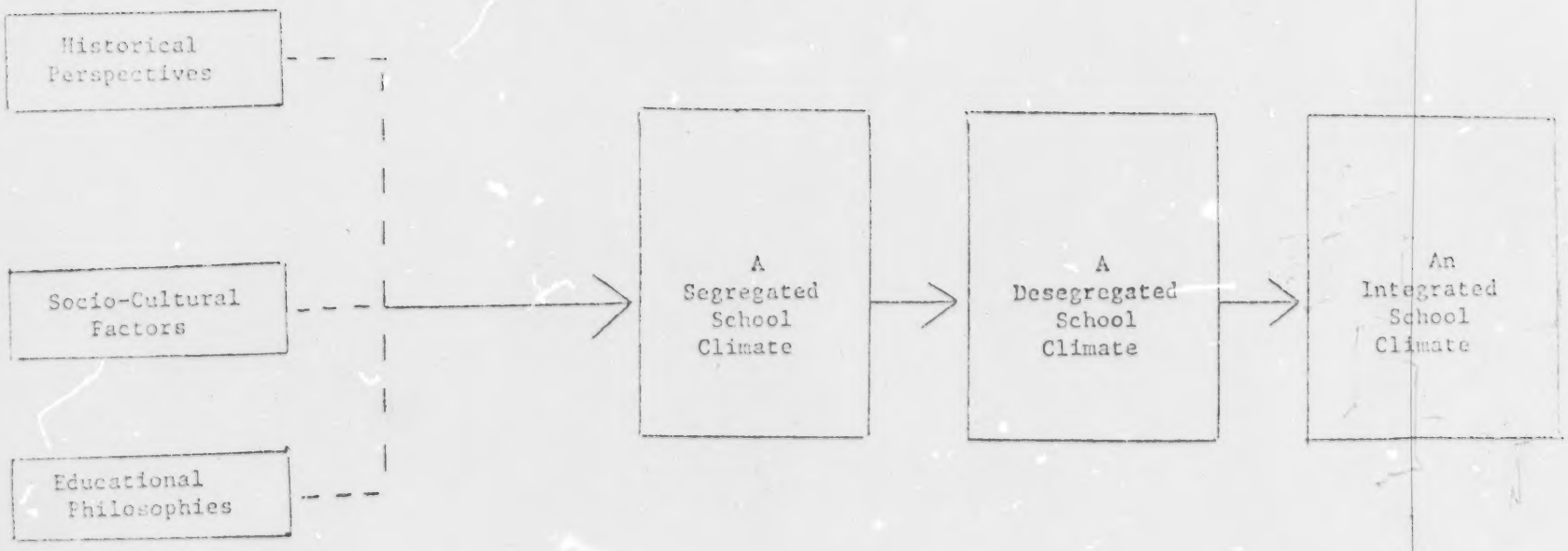
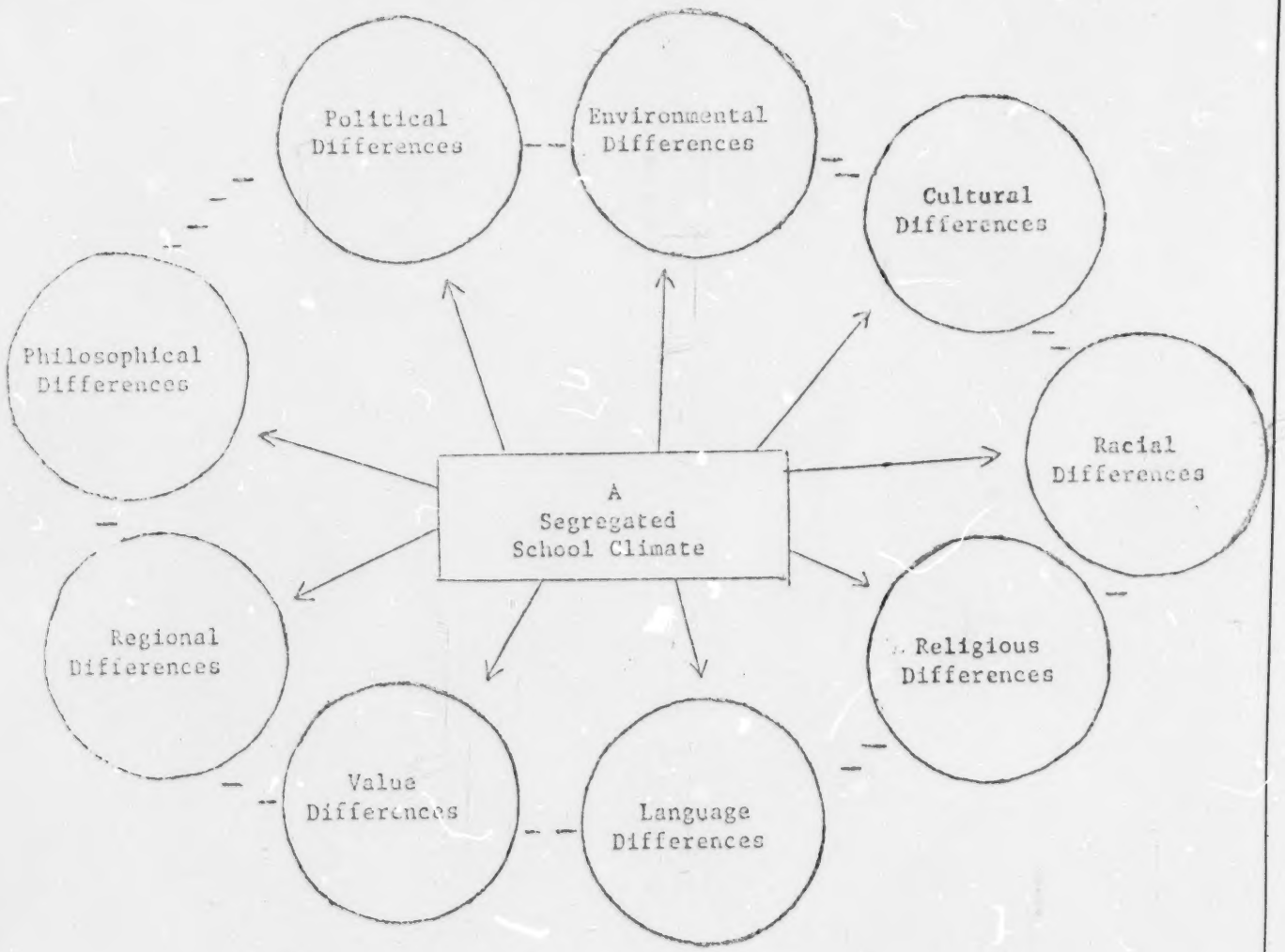


FIGURE 1A

A Segregated School Climate



Parents and educators alike tended to feel that isolation and ethnocentricity should be maintained at all costs.

With the decision of Brown vs. the Board of Education Topeka, Kansas (1954) the educational establishment moved to bring about a desegregated school climate. (See Figure 1B). This pattern led to the conclusion that differences among learners is inherently essential if students are to be able to become effective citizens in a pluralistic society. The problem with the desegregation process to date, however, is that it is often conceived of as an artificial climate imposed by ratios and busing rather than a learning situation wherein ethnocentricity is developed as a positive attribute.

An integrated school climate once achieved would allow for individual differences to be stressed rather than minimized. (See Figure 1C). In an integrated classroom environmental issues could be analyzed from different points of view. Thereby, the classroom would become a microcosm of the total society.

## Problems of Moving From A Desegregated To An Integrated School Climate

In the last fifteen years the nation has witnessed one school system after another going through the pains of school desegregation. This process has often been met with vocal opposition and indecisive leadership. Moreover, educational systems have spent little, if any time or resources in preparing their biracial staffs for teaching in an integrated climate. The results have often led to misunderstandings, fear, and hostile relationships among faculty members and students of differing racial groups.

School systems compelled by federal courts to desegregate oftentimes concerned themselves with artificial restraints in the classroom. They lost sight of the important factor of teacher preparation for a new environmental climate.

FIGURE 1B

A Desegregated School Climate

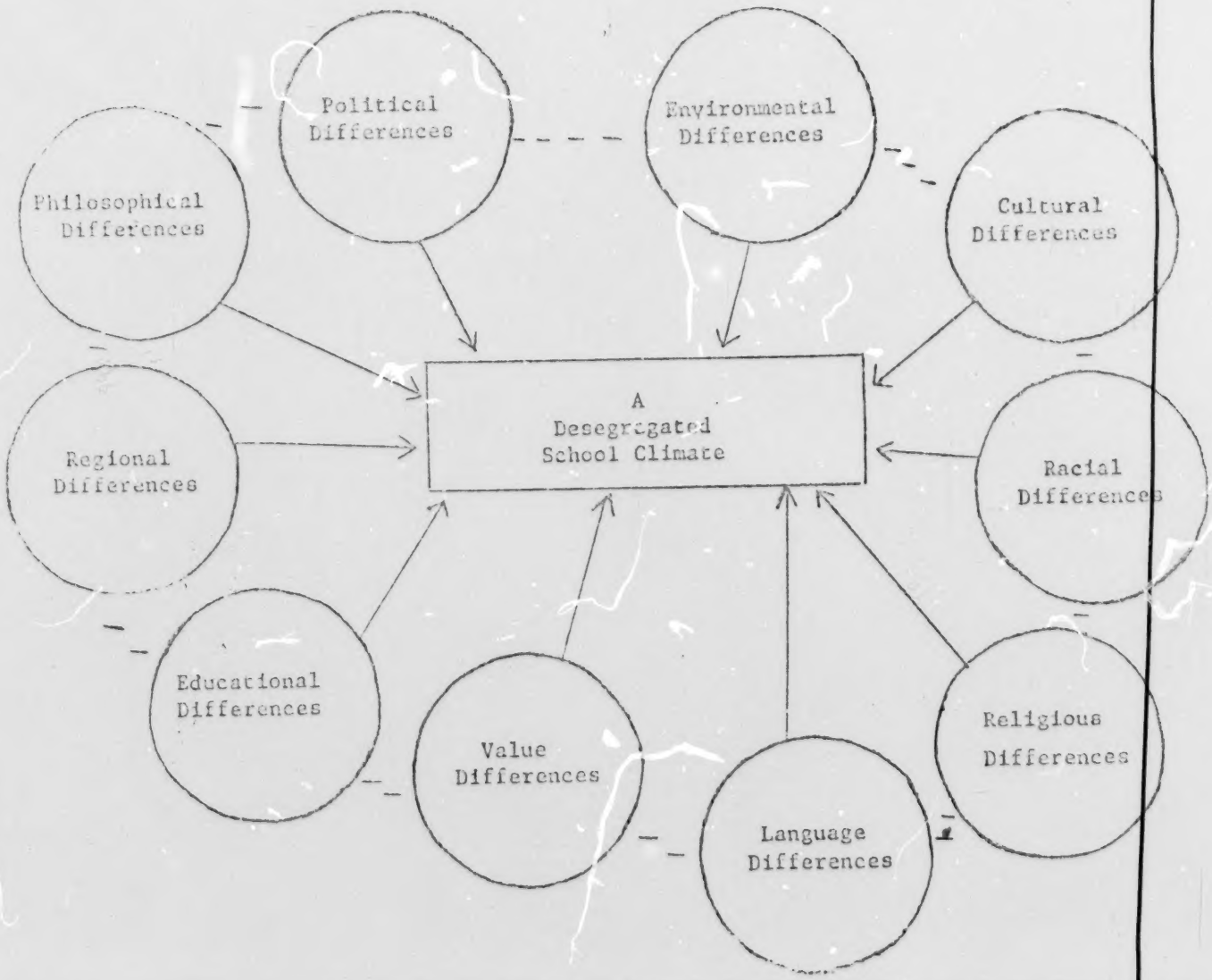
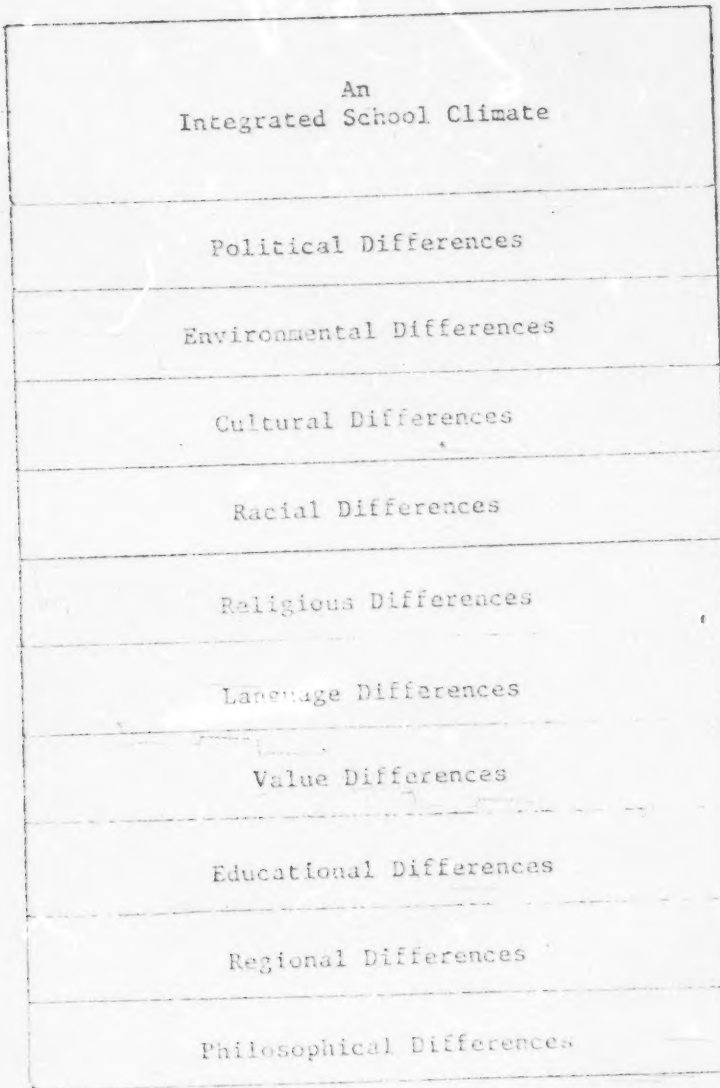


FIGURE 1C

An Integrated School Climate



For teachers like students had existing value systems reflecting a segregated environment. Moreover, since teachers as individuals are products of their environment, it can be understood that many of the myths, fears, and hostilities fostered by students and parents in the community also existed among the faculty of the schools.

School administrators often were reluctant to encourage scholarly exchanges of views relative to such concerns as discipline, morals, goals, curriculum, etc., for fear that a cleavage based on racial backgrounds would occur. This lack of communication often led to further misunderstandings, fear, and hostility.

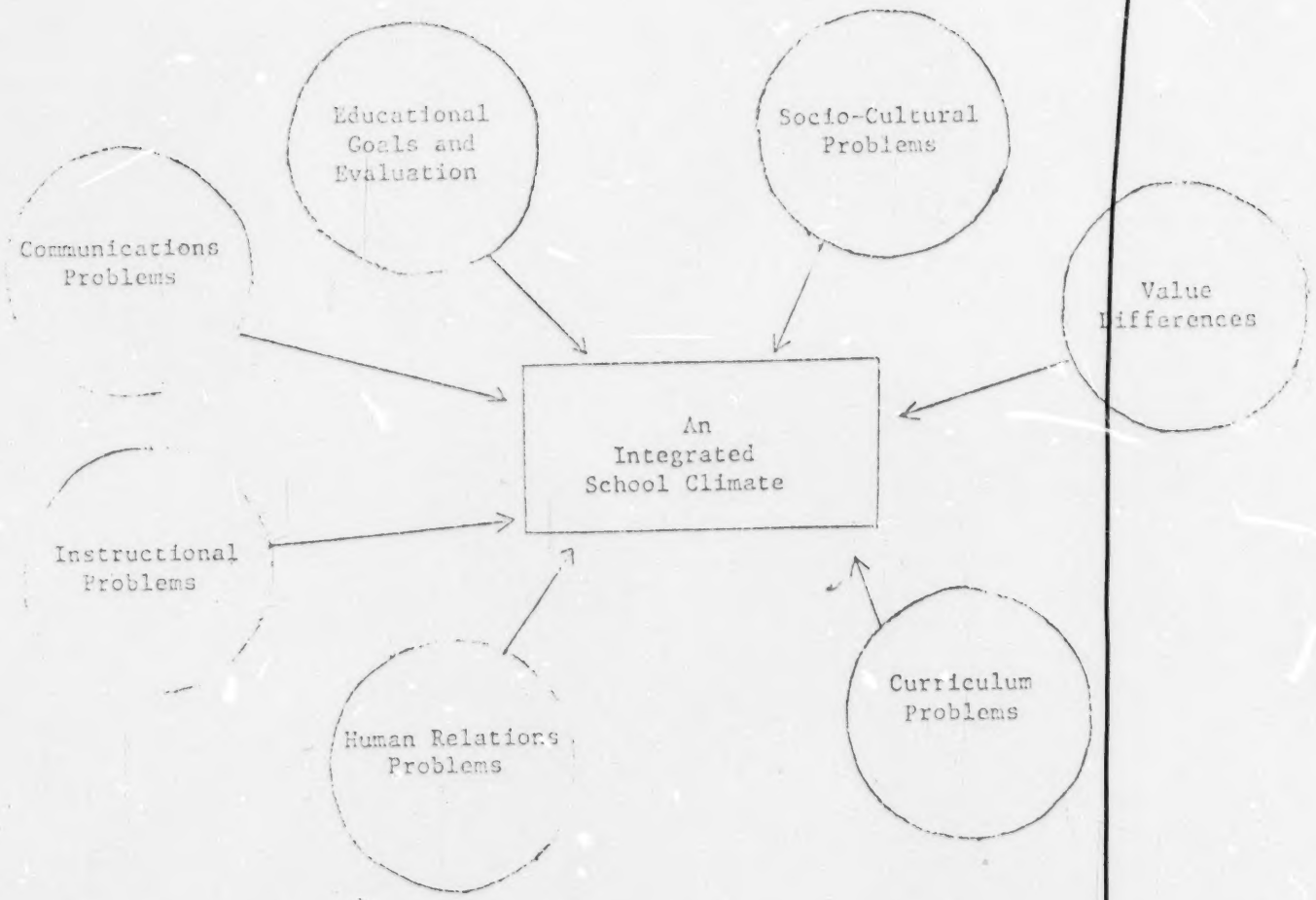
The resulting pattern thus often led to the prejudgment of professional peers, the establishment of clicks based on race, age, or other cultural diversities as well as a manifestation for holding on to one's own values for fear of being culturally isolated. A better solution in the future might be more frank interchanges among faculty members and between faculty members and students, parents, and the total community relative to educational concerns. Thus, the first step to moving into an integrated school climate would be to establish positive intergroup relations among professional educators. For how can the problems impeding the integration process be resolved until educators experience and react to the cultural diversities existing in a multi-ethnic school classroom?

Once educators establish a positive system of inquiry then such problems as presented in Figure 2 might be discussed and alternatives sought for implementation. Each of the problems noted will be briefly elaborated on in this paper.

FIGURE 7

Problems of Moving From A

Desegregated to Integrated School Climate



Instructional Goals and Education. The lack of clear cut objectives and measureable evaluative criteria have restricted the learning potential of many students, in particular children from minority cultural, racial, and/or ethnic groups. Moreover, standardized tests in the past have been biased in favor of the majority subculture or white, anglo-saxon, protestant, middle class and urban.

Therefore, in order for an integrated school climate to be developed a need exists for the establishment of measureable objectives and the evaluation of pupils in terms of their performance. Objectives and evaluative criteria should be arrived at by professional educators in light of their cultural backgrounds and experiences. Only if all the variables and value referents comprising a pluralistic society are considered in formulating objectives will the future needs of education be met.

Socio-Cultural Problems. Differences of interpretation to basic issues facing society exist and are usually related to one's cultural, racial, and/or ethnic heritage. For instance, a White teacher will have a different perspective toward discrimination than a Black teacher in many instances. Differences in interpretations need to be encouraged within the context of rational inquiry if alternatives to social problems are ever to be achieved. Rational inquiry of controversial issues should be encouraged among professional educators within the school setting as well as within the classroom.

Value Differences. Differences with respect to the important things in life vary with each individual. But, in general, one's values are directly related to his cultural, economic, racial and/or ethnic background. Within a professional and instructional environment it is important to be exposed to

exploring value referents via a value clarification process. One value system should not be stressed as the desired reference system. For such action tends to foster the ideals of indoctrination rather than rational thinking and decision-making.

Curriculum Problems. Many problems have in recent years been attributed to the social studies curriculum such as: relevancy, accuracy, and biased interpretation. Moreover, social studies instructors have been criticized for heavily relying upon the textbook-lecture method of instruction. Despite the deluge of newer curriculum materials and resources, much criticism still remains. One of the principal reasons accounting for the negative reactions is that many social studies educators have approached curriculum change in a piece-meal manner rather than attempting to develop a rationale for a social studies curriculum from K-12, in terms of specific criteria to be developed at each level. It should be noted that curriculum problems presently existing can only be resolved if there is a total re-evaluation of the scope and sequence of the program in terms of a given rationale. The 1916 curriculum can not be rejuvenated via a partial drafting process lacking commitment in terms of an agreed upon rationale.

Human Relations Problems. The highly technical society which we presently live in has tended to dehumanize our interaction with each other. Teachers often remain secluded from their personal peers for fear that their mode of operation will be subjected to criticism. Moreover, little is done in the classroom for students to assess the factors attributing to or restricting their socialization process. In the future, much more effort will need to be spent on developing positive intergroup relations between professional peers as well as students from differing racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds within the classroom.

Instructional Problems. The educational system today as in the past still relies largely on the written medium to present information. However, students and adults alike often receive a great deal of information via other channels -- visual, oral, or any combination of media. Moreover, instructional techniques are often so structured that they restrict creativity and originality in the collection and interpretation of information. It is true that in recent years many newer instructional techniques, such as inquiry, case study, and simulation, have been stressed in colleges of education and in the professional literature. However, many of these approaches have met with criticism or rejection by classroom teachers. One reason accounting for this phemonenon might be the fact that there has been little effort to train teachers with the necessary skills for utilizing these approaches. In the future, teachers will need to be trained to utilize a wide variety of techniques. But they must also be cognizant of the fact that techniques alone are no utopia. The determining factor should be the provision of a combination of instructional alternatives that would achieve one's objectives. Techniques would be employed in light of formative evaluation data relative to the student's competencies for a given area of study.

Communication Problems. Language can improve or interfere with communicating messages between two or more individuals. Often words have several meanings and can be misconstrued if not properly received. More effort must be put forth by professional educators to insure that their messages are received and internalized in their proper context. To meet this challenge an effort should be made to utilize all communicative channels available to them whether they be oral, written, visual, or any combination thereof. Moreover, educators must strive to insure that their bodily actions, facial expressions, etc., reflect

the intent of their message and not interfere with the meaning intended. To accomplish a positive communication climate will require that all become sensitive to the responses of others in the process to transmit a given message.

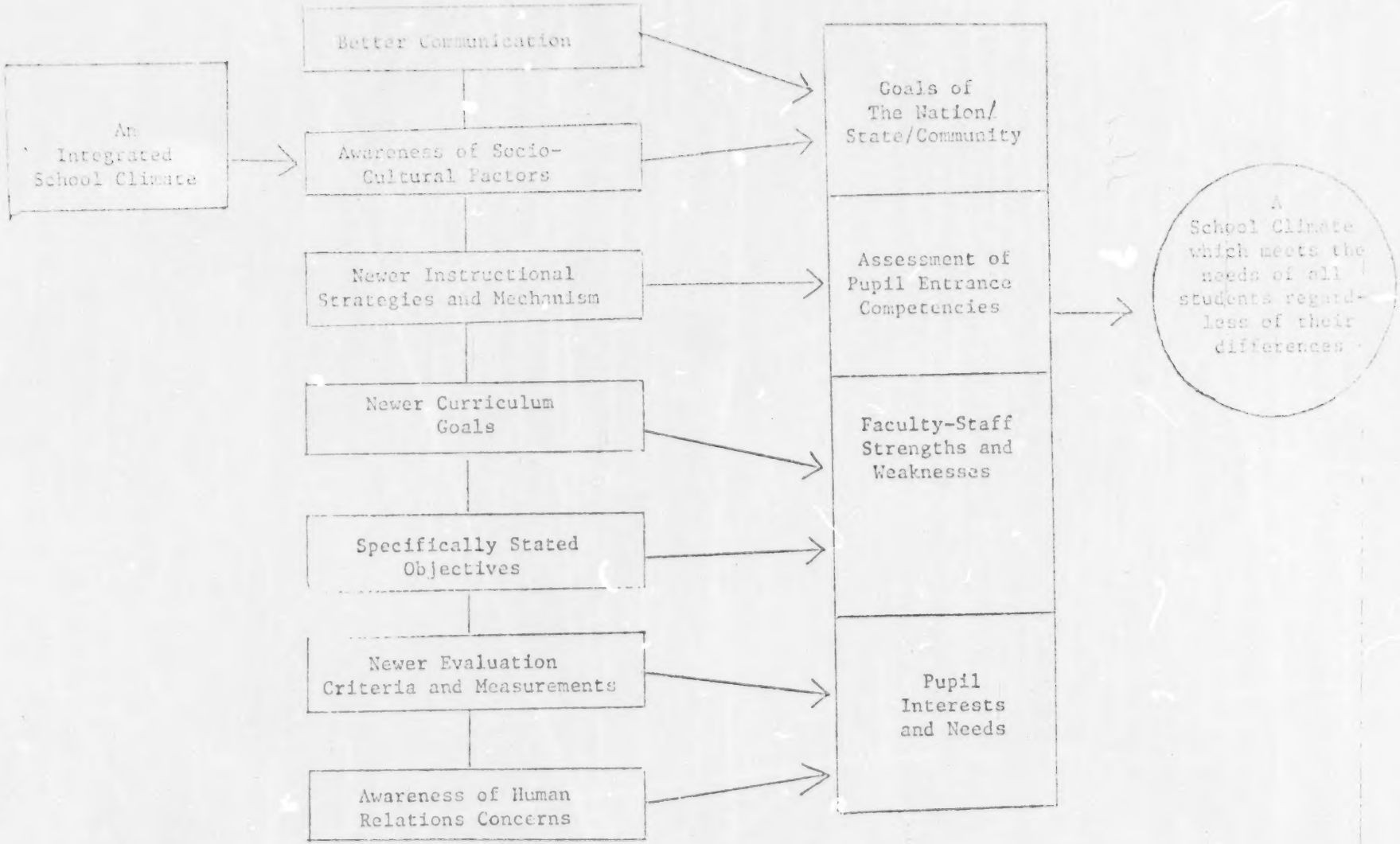
## The Integrated School Of The Future

An integrated school climate would be one wherein cultural pluralism provided for the development of rationale inquiry into concepts in terms of differing frames of reference as well as the development of respect for individual human dignity. (See Figure 3). In an integrated classroom the teacher would strive to develop positive communication linkages among students from diverse backgrounds. Awareness of socio-cultural factors influencing one's belief system would be explored in terms of differing belief systems as well as generalized conclusions normally attributed to the total society. Efforts would be made to develop a more humanizing approach to education which stresses interactions between people rather than mere fact memorization procedures. The curriculum would come alive by allowing students to master specifically stated objectives through various means. Therefore, instructional strategies would become flexible and varied to meet the needs and interests of individuals and/or groups of students. Students, thereby, would be evaluated in terms of their own progress in competency based areas of learning such as the following domains -- knowledge, value, or skill oriented.

## A New Education: Some Thoughts

A new concept of education as denoted in the integrated school would go beyond the present limits of today's school. Education under the auspice of school administration and personnel as well as other community agents should provide greater scope, facilities and resources, and involvement learning.

The Integrated School of the Future


An Integrated School Climate
Better Communication
Awareness of Socio-Cultural Factors
Newer Instructional Strategies and Mechanism
Newer Curriculum Goals
Specifically Stated Objectives
Newer Evaluation Criteria and Measurements
Awareness of Human Relations Concerns
Goals of The Nation/ State/Community
Assessment of Pupil Entrance Competencies
Faculty-Staff Strengths and Weaknesses
Pupil Interests and Needs
A School Climate which meets the needs of all students regardless of their differences

...would capitalize on all of the agencies and people who contribute to learning and education. The existing emphasis on abstract concepts and vicarious experiences would be enlarged because some young people have insufficient experience to deal with abstractions and many need more contact with real things and real people. The new school would have work-study programs to enable students to gain practical experience to which abstract and concrete study and thinking could be related. Study and work for short or extended periods would be arranged out of the classroom and out of the school. Many community, business, industrial, governmental, and other agencies would serve as supplementary learning centers.

Study programs would be individually designed, based on continuous and careful diagnosis of individual intellectual, psychological, physical, social, and emotional growth, and work would add essential responsibility and provide status for them. Being a student would be recognized as a youngster's work. Education would offer as much or as little planned control of the school environment as necessary. The question of what and by whom controls would be exerted may present some thorny problems, but it also provides part of the basis for deciding on the purposes of education and the new roles of teachers.

The new education would include careful, continuous diagnosis of what a student knows, what he thinks he wants to know, how he learns, what he wants to learn, what he is able and motivated to learn. It would include counseling about alternatives in learning, recognition of various levels of learning, and consideration of the degree to which learning has transfer value, is generalized or synthesized.

A new concept of education would help the learner develop an understanding of what learning is, how it takes place for him, how and why it can be or is

exciting or dull, challenging or boring, rewarding or a waste of time.

The new education would explore and recognize conditions and attitudes which influence learning. Learning would be based on theories far beyond the simplicity of conditioned-response psychology. The new education would be concerned with how people feel about themselves and how they feel about others, and the influence of such feelings on how and what they learn. It would be concerned much more with the effects of physical and mental health on learning and would be seen as oriented to helping people live more effective, productive lives, not merely directed at getting a better job or social position. It would stress individual assessment based on what a person can do. It would provide for internal evaluation but would also use external assessment as cues to what has happened to an individual. One of the focuses would be helping the individual organize his own existential world.

The subcultures of childhood and adolescent life would be used as part of the substance for learning. Study and learning in human relations interaction, and growth would use the real problems and situations of living (as students). Both real and simulated situations would be employed to apply knowledge and skills from all phases of learning.

Evaluation of student progress would be primarily in terms of behavioral goals. This would include not only the assessment of students' intellectual ability--ability to analyze, understand, interpret, and use what has been learned--but assessment of their performance as members of the school society.

In many areas of learning, particularly where performance goals can be identified specifically, such as in mathematics, typing, spelling, etc., requirements would be in terms of achievement rather than time. For example, the student would no longer be required to take two semesters of geometry or

[illegible] he would study only as long as it takes him to demonstrate that he has achieved the specified goals.

Flexibility in all subjects and areas of study would eliminate the school schedule as we now know it. School would not begin and close at the same time for all students. In fact, on some days some students may not even "attend" school in the present sense. Schools, libraries, museums, art galleries, and other locations for study would collaborate by pooling resources to fit the students' learning goals.

Eventually, as the above sources of information and knowledge become readily accessible and as terminals for computer-assisted instruction and computer-stored information become available, the problems of access to data would disappear.

The new school would provide all types of materials for learning, including extensive collections of supplementary materials and primary sources which would be available on microfilm, microfiche, and other forms of computer-storing.

Teaching groups would be organized so that both instructional and subject matter experts can be available to make judgments about selecting content and approach in teaching. A variety of non-educators--psychologists, sociologists, social workers, artists, musicians, philosophers, political scientists, and other consultants--would be available on a temporary or part-time basis to work in schools and to help teachers analyze and make judgments about the appropriateness of curriculum and instruction. The selection of learning goals would include much more than deciding what, why, and how to teach. Much more emphasis would be given to creating the conditions under which learning could be fostered through individual study.

These ideas about the school in a new concept of education are far from comprehensive, but they do give some idea about the kinds of people needed to staff schools and about what the multitude of jobs in teaching might be like.[2]

## Attitudes Of Teachers: A Key Ingredient To Achieving An Integrated Classroom Environment

Desegregation has failed to yield the goal of integration, primarily because "integration involves in addition to racial mix a climate of inter-racial acceptance".[3] That such a climate is lacking is apparent by the frequent and increasing incidences of racial strife within schools, the numerous cases in which Black children are relegated to internally segregated classrooms, and the way in which children are given preferential treatment in disciplinary action growing out of racial conflicts.

Thus, because of prejudice, Black children are all too often exposed to "a steady flow of insults and humiliation that blocks their learning in many ways".[4] White prejudice toward children is manifest in and out of the classroom. The child's sense of inferiority is reinforced, and for a growing number of Black children it "evokes a burning anger and hostility toward the school...".[5]

Although teachers are only one component of the system which influences the development of children, they are nevertheless, the one component having the most direct and persistent involvement with children. Because of this, they are the most crucial element in the development of a child's self-image.[6] If White teachers are prejudiced and have learned to accept the countless myths associated with being Black, they are not likely to provide Black children with the kind of teacher behavior which is necessary for developing a positive self-image. Conversely, White teachers who are free of prejudice and who posses highly positive attitudes toward members of another racial composition can

enhance self evaluation, even if they remain in segregated settings".[7] Teachers within the interracial classroom hold the key to the many positive inter-relation consequences which result from opportunities for children to engage in cross-racial self evaluations. But such opportunities must not only be sanctioned by teachers but actively promulgated by them in a systematic and conscientious manner. This is unlikely to occur if the White teacher harbors prejudice toward Black children.

It would seem, then, that teacher education institutions and individual school systems have a major responsibility to develop positive intergroup attitudes within prospective and inservice teachers. Classroom instructors must be confronted with the issue of racial prejudice as a critical factor existing in climate for learning and, thus far, there is little evidence to suggest that this factor has been of serious concern in teacher education programs. Pearl contends that "one of the most intriguing conditions of societal survival to witness in our nation is the pathetic attempts the teacher education programs are making to alter the course of the river of racism...",[8] Pearl observes that "Schools of Education have not even begun to eradicate vestiges of racism as it affects programs or courses".[9]

Colleges of Education in the past and still continue to place great stress on developing intellectual skills and subject matter competencies. "Students who fail to demonstrate acceptable levels of academic performance are quickly eliminated, as are those who fail to achieve minimal comprehension of learning."[10] Yet, the issue of teacher attitudes toward children, especially of a different racial group are rarely examined. If treated at all, it often is in the abstract and just tangently relates to the area of prejudice. In the final analysis, however, how teachers feel about children in general, and especially how they

[illegible] children from different racial backgrounds, is perhaps much more critical than either their knowledge of the subject or their group of learning principles.

One example to support the above ascertion occurred in 1972. During a meeting between social studies students from a predominantly White institution and those of a predominantly Black institution the following dialogue occurred:

Sandra (Black Student)
I feel that since your institution has only a few Whites and we are mostly Black, we should get together periodically to discuss basic educational issues and problems.

Joan (White Student)
Where will these discussions take place?

Sandra (Black Student)
The discussions could occur periodically at our respective institutions. We could come to your institution perhaps once or twice during a semester and you could come to our College periodically.

Joan (White Student)
I am a "Black Studies" major and though I feel these discussions might prove interesting, I do not want to cut my classes to go to your institution. I feel my course work should take precedent to making these visits.

Sandra (Black Student)
We have the most notable Negro historians in the state. Moreover, you would be able to get a first hand view of life in a predominantly Black environment.

Joan (White Student)
I can not see the use of such an experience.

Sandra (Black Student)
I hope you never teach my children about Black history.

The above dialogue indicates that Joan feels that the attainment of subject matter is more important than developing positive intergroup relationships with respect to present educational issues and problems. The question then arises as to how Joan will interact with children in a classroom, especially those of

racial group.

The barrier to ameliorating the relations between children of diverse racial origins is essentially the lack of a moral and intellectual commitment on the part of teachers that integration is a desirable condition. Only when the teachers, the curriculum and the staff are free of racist doctrine and practice will integration be possible.[11]

Footnotes

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2. Edelfelt, Roy A., "A Possible Dream: A New Education and New Models of Teacher". Unpublished paper. (Portions of Section of Paper entitled: "A New Education: Some Thoughts" were abstracted from the above source.)

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4. Silberman, Charles, Crisis In The Classroom. N.Y.: Random House, p. 92.

5. Ibid., p. 92.

6. Smith, M. Brewster and Pillavin, Jane A., "The Schools and Prejudice", in Prejudice: U.S.A., edited by Charles Y. Glock and Ellen Siegelman, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1969.

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8. Ibid., p. 434.

9. Pearl, Arthur, "Can The Cause Be The Cure?". Journal of Teacher Education, 20 (Winter, 1969), p. 433.

10. Allen, Benjamin J., The Racial Attitudes of White Pre-Service Teachers. Unpublished report: Florida State University (May 5, 1971), p. 2.

11. Ibid., p. 3.